

rivers of knowledge bulletin #7, Sept. 2010

» Finding the Sea. «

Walter Helmut Fritz, *Becoming a River, Collected Poems, 1979, p. 263*

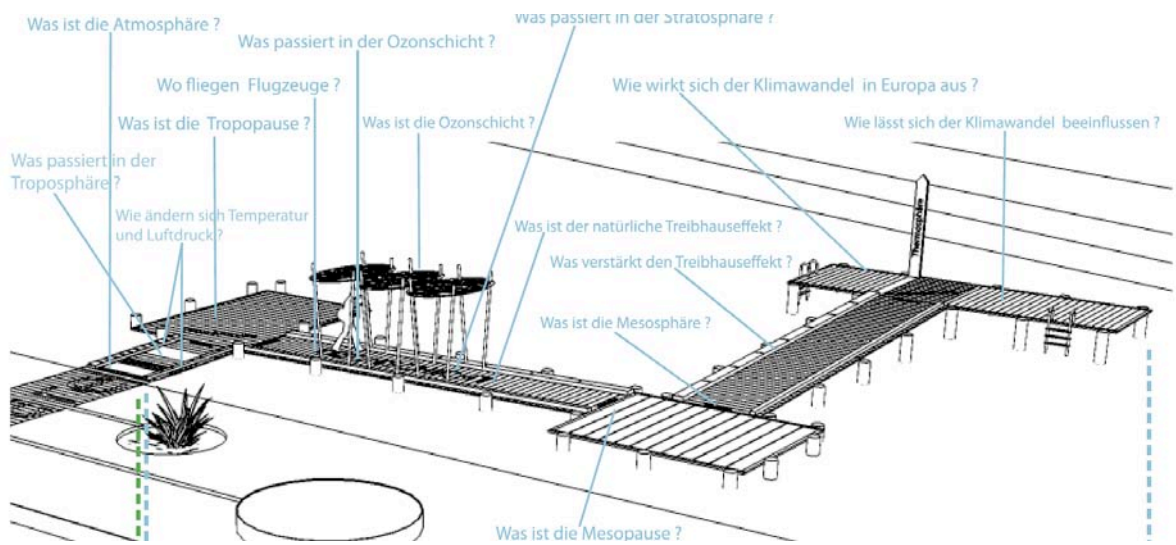
With this issue of the bulletin we complete the project presentation with the easternmost stations at Offenbach and Mühlheim. You'll also read about two projects which are not strictly linked to a location and could be applied in different places.



At Bürgel's »Reichstag« we refer to the Yukon and atmospheric contaminations, explaining the strata of the atmosphere

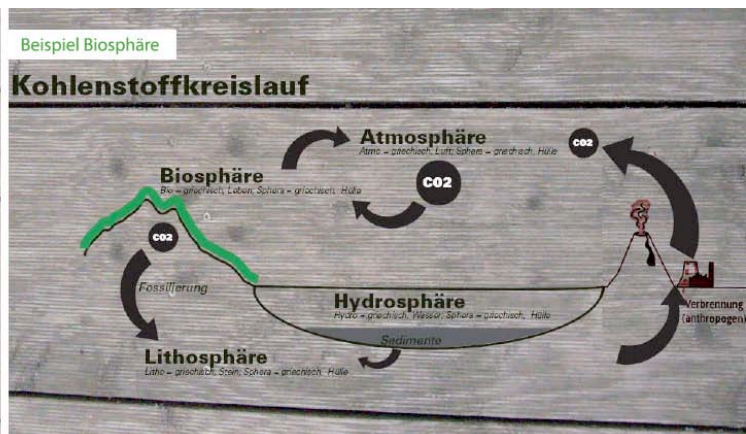
Katja and Sophie's second project can be found in close vicinity to the first one. It is nevertheless by far more complex in terms of the quantity of data transmitted. Here at the Bürgel Reichstag you encounter a spot which has characteristics of a park but with by far too much tarmac and too much traffic space. It has a longitudinal structure, not taking in consideration the actual breadth of the space.

The intervention thus deals with the urbanistic question of opening this park space to the river and slowing down traffic speed at the bikeway. The project offers a mix of landscape-architecture, a conversion of a traffic space and a huge display as an open-air-classroom for teaching and learning about climate and climate change.



Visitors will learn a lot about climate change and the intertwined system of atmosphere and climate affected by climate change

The two designers created a climate-gangplank which explains the different strata of the atmosphere in slightly ascending levels, from biosphere to thermosphere. You learn about life and physical conditions in the different strata. For a school class this structure makes it easy to teach and learn in bigger groups as some of the students could stand on the jetty while others can stand on the grass, thus groups can hardly be too big. The changing direction of the plank offers different views while you are walking along; above all the view straight to the river and straight to the dam. This design creates one of the most didactical stations, an open structure with a massive content. Atmosphere as an integral entity and as a segmented structure can be understood intuitively and on different levels.



On the planks you'll find information galore, an optimal situation for school-classes and adult students alike.



The station acts as a connection from the park to the river, interrupting the oversized tarmac-surface and opening it in a graphical way..



The next station, at Bürgel's Bootsclub offers a sculptural perspective on the dramatic influence of climate-change on migrating birds

In an early stage of the project we had the chance to save a former electricity pylon from demolition. Dipl. Des. Martin Wenzel embraced this spot with enthusiasm and created the by far most sculptural project on our climate path, a huge bird's nest. The station deals with remains of industrial structures (the electricity pole), the Turkish river Kızılırmak and migratory birds, with a strongly frequented Stopp-over for migratory birds only some hundred meters south of our site: Schultheiße Weiher.

Martin, a designer who works on the borderline between sculpture and design, decided to turn the pylon into a symbol for endangered migratory birds, always keeping in mind the millions of birds who die through effects of the climate change and by high voltage cables.



Martin's design deals with the deconstruction of industrial structures and with the effect of climate change on birds.

On the other side this new nest-pylon offers a habitat for domestic birds and migratory birds, not only by providing dozens of nesting boxes. As an annex to the big pylon and as a decent observatory, Martin erects a little sister-tower right in front of the pylon and a little closer to the river.

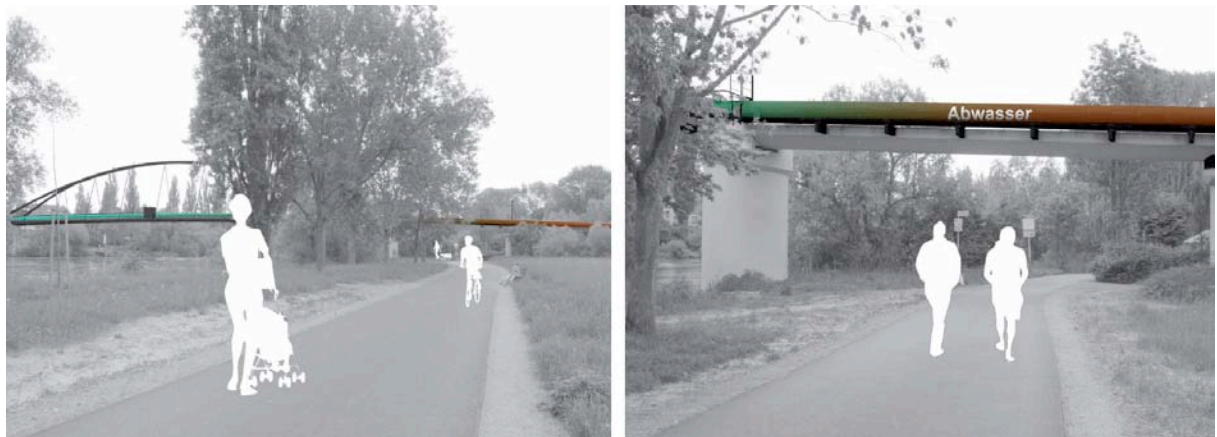
As Kızılırmak is one of the most prominent Turkish rivers, loaded with all of the possible problems a river can encounter we have already during our research phase got in touch with Turkish environmentalist and we expect to create adoptions of certain the maintenance-functions by some Offenbach citizens with Turkish background, a huge community in this city.

Martin plans to travel to Turkey in order to build the nest-boxes with driftwood from Kızılırmak. Getting deeper into research with ornithologist we hope to learn more about birds who might know both, Main and Kızılırmak, which could give a further knock to the project.



Arthur-von-Weinberg-bridge is an ideal stage for the topics of the regeneration of river through the separation of river-water and sewage. Aspects of contamination through industrial emissions are being stressed, and important factor in the understanding and fighting climate-change.

Arthur-von-Weinberg was an inventor of global fame one of the founders of a huge chemical industry. Being a Jew, in his mid eighties he was deported and killed in a concentration camp in the 30s. To his honor, fame and memory this bridge was named after him. The bridge is in itself a technical monument, as a pedestrian passage and a support to a big tube which transported chemical sewage from one of the production plants on the southern riverbank to a wastewater treating plant on the northern riverbank.



The bridge will become a kind of a super-sign for the entire project

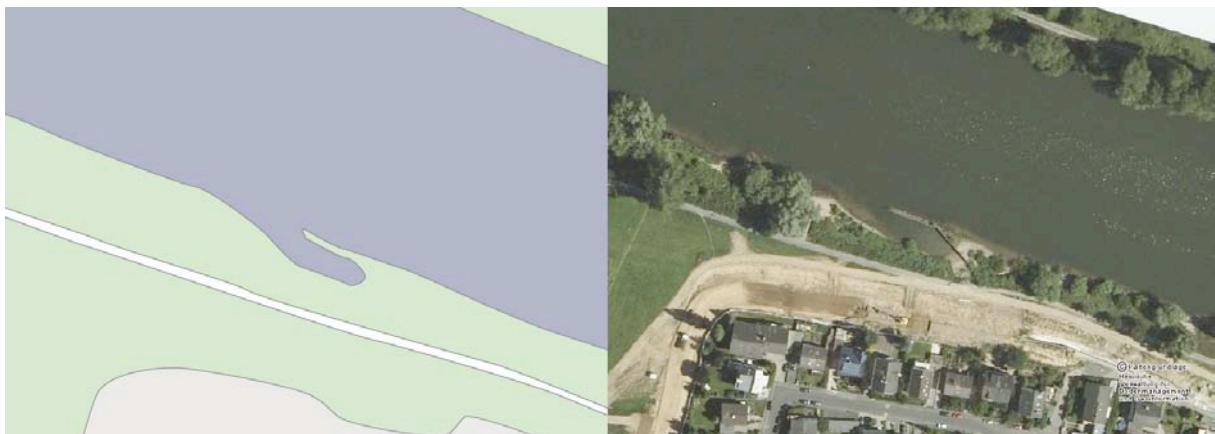
Thus it is a symbol of the separation of sewage and freshwater and hence a historical step for the recovery of Main river from its catastrophic period in the 60s and 70s with periodical mass death of fish to its actual situation with more than 30 abundant species of fish.



... besides that it will be used to inform about the contamination of several rivers around the world and the influence of climate change on the quality.

Franziska Bock decided to focus on an explanatory strategy in combination with the conversion of the tube into a super-sign for wastewater-treatment. You will find numbers and statistics, maps and references to other rivers, most notably Tajo which runs through Spain and Portugal but also technical information on water treatment and successful strategies for river recovery.

References to other rivers are being made, especially with Tajo. Tajo rolls through Spain and Portugal and is still heavily polluted. We hope to create a stronger awareness for this fascinating river in two of the EU-states.



Mühlheim will create a beach and an open-air-classroom in the area of the old bark-harbour. Climate change will also become an important topic at that place, where it can be illustrated in a very concrete and direct way.

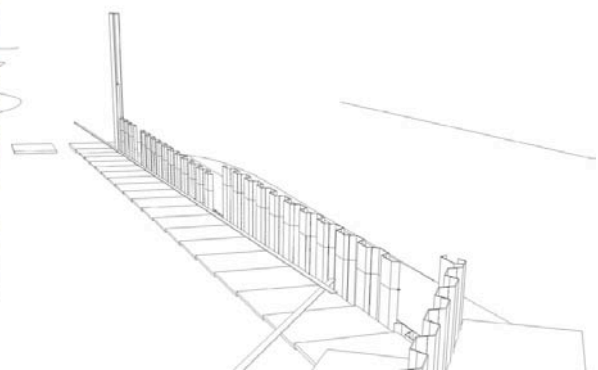
The City of Mühlheim set up a riverside-renaturation program years ago. The program included the restoration of the mouth of river Rodau, which was completed in recent years.

One of the actual projects is the construction of a river-swim-bay with a nearly natural appearance close to a sheet pile wall. This sheet pile wall served as a protection to the fisher's boats until some years ago. Now the boats have been moved to another harbour and this spot lost its practical function. The area also sparked plans for an open air-classroom between the dike and the river.



When the bark-harbour was moved the pile-sheet-wall lost its original function. We shall use it as the backbone of an explanatory path through the topic of climate-change, barrages and fish migration.

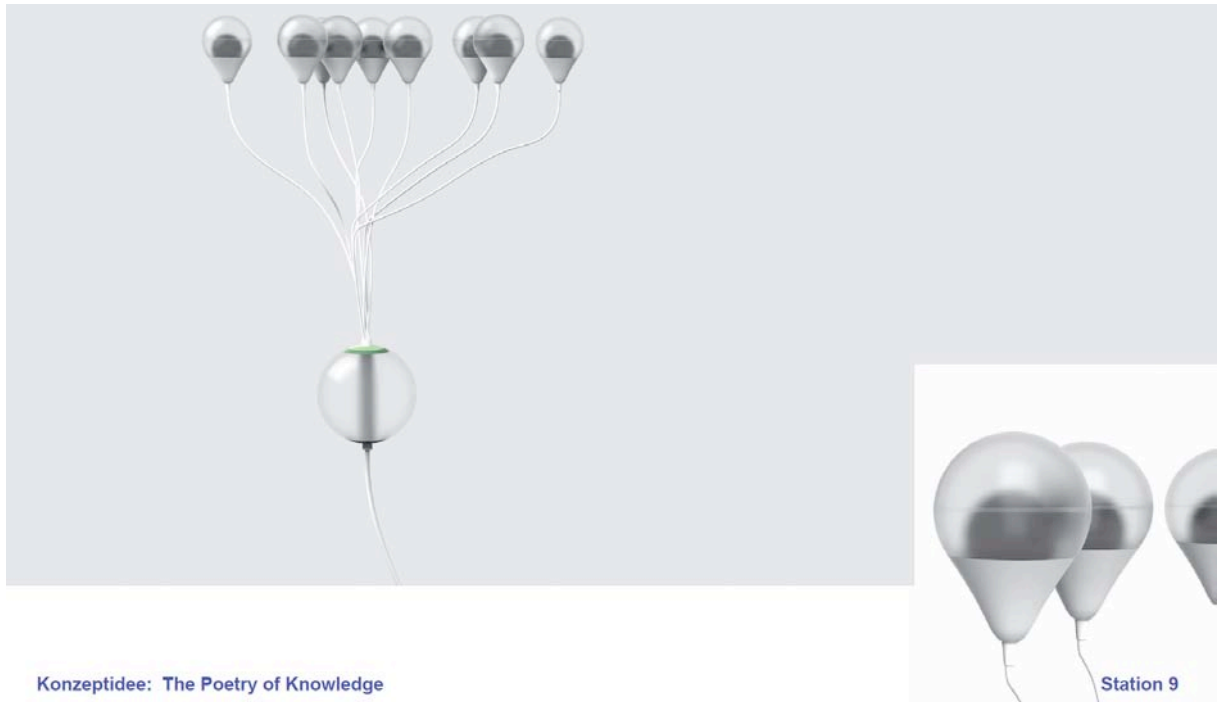
Till Hergenhausen and Uwe Tischer together with Hans Krauß took up the task to develop concepts for this multi-layered situation.



The conversion of the useless sheet-pile-wall into a staircase representing the 34 barrages of Main River is a thrilling idea. It becomes an exiting place for learning about the effect of barrages, climate-change and fish.

Till and Uwe focussed on the sheet pile wall itself, transforming it into a gangway to the river. Slightly descending over 34 broad and long steps this gangway illustrates and explains the 34 barrages of Main river, which constitute a serious danger to fish and river-life in general.

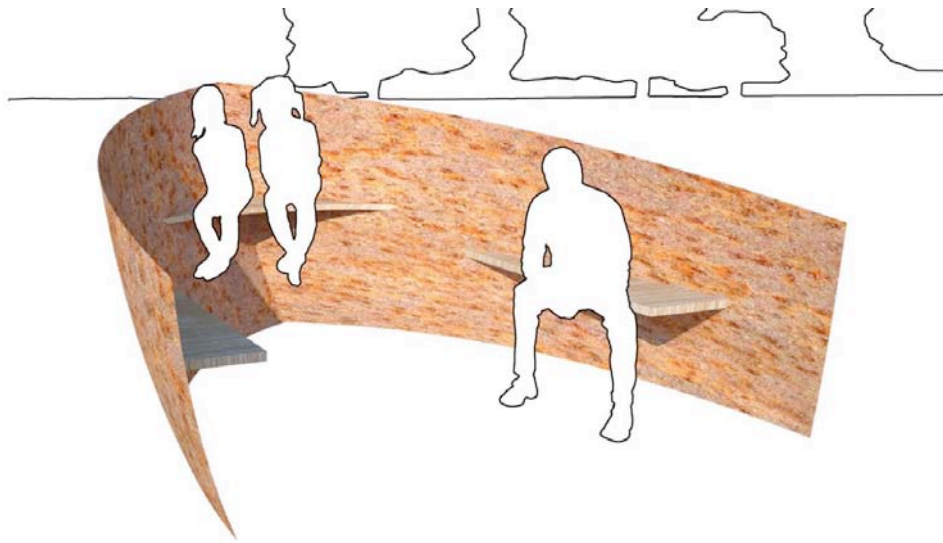
Hans focussed his design on an experimental and interactive display in form of drifting buoys, connecting it to the idea of the open air classroom. His title »The Poetry of Knowledge«/»Die Poesie des Wissens« is a beautiful metaphor for new forms a learning and teacher-pupil-interaction.



Hans Krauß's interactive buoys are inspired by fish spawn. It can display effects caused by climate change. He also successfully submitted this design for his first grade exam at University of Arts & Design Offenbach (HfG)



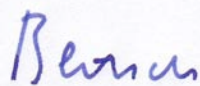
The ensemble, if completed in this way would also include a social gathering point in the form of a broken / semi-finished rowing-boat with benches made out of corroded steel. Moritz König, who designed this boat, sees it as a rather artistic, sculptural intervention, a symbolic reference to the former function of the spot and to rivers and civilizations in general. The boat also expresses his concern about the endangered biological ark of river life.



Moritz König's design is obviously inspired by the spot at Mühlheim, it could nevertheless be located at any station along the climate path as it addresses archaic and subconscious aspects of our relation with river, life, survival and society, quoting the boat, the shelter and Noah's Ark.

Till's, Uwe's, Hans' and Moritz' proposals convert this spot into the most complex one in the entire climate-path. As climate change has a massive impact on spring-flood periods and water temperatures, fish and river life are clear and objective indicators for our slowly but drastically changing climatic, biological and social environment.

When we started the project I would not even have dreamt of such a bounty of creative and inspiring ideas. The designer managed to create spots with an enormous content on climate-change AND a very high quality as social gathering-points. After the designs were approved by our partners we entered in first discussions with permit authorities. In October the second project, which will deal with graphic design aspects will start.



Prof. Georg-Christof Bertsch
Frankfurt/Main, 9. September 2010